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Electoral Systems, Ethnic Cleavages, and Experience with Democracy

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Electoral systems, party systems, social cleavages, presidential systems, experience with democracy

Abstract

Recent studies show the effects of electoral systems and ethnic cleavages on the number of parties in emerging democracies differ from those effects observed in more established democracies. Building on recent arguments maintaining the quality of democracy improves with experience, we argue the reason for the differences in the findings between established and emerging democracies is that the effects of these variables on the number of parties differ according to a country's experience with elections. To test this argument, we analyse party system fragmentation in 89 established and emerging democracies and the conditioning effects experience with elections have on the effects of district magnitude, ethnic cleavages, and variables relating to the presidential party system. The results show the effects of institutional and social cleavage variables differ substantially between emerging and established democracies, but these effects begin to approximate those seen in more established democracies with additional experience with elections.

One of the most frequently studied questions in political science regards the effects that electoral institutions and social cleavages have on the development of party systems. This literature examines whether party system fragmentation (i.e. the number of political parties) is determined by social cleavages, institutional arrangements, or some combination of the two sets of variables (e.g. Duverger, 1954; Lijphart, 1999). Research on the effects of institutions shows that in addition to the effects of electoral system properties, changes in the size of the legislative party system reflect changes in the size of the presidential party system—due to the greater importance voters often attach to presidential elections vis-à-vis parliamentary elections—conditional on the time between presidential and legislative elections (e.g. Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006).

While these variables have been examined extensively in established democracies, the effects of these variables have received less attention in developing democracies. Those studies that have examined developing democracies find that the effects of electoral systems and/or social cleavages differ from those effects seen in more established democracies (e.g. Morgenstern and Vázquez-D'Elía, 2007; Moser, 1999; Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich, 2003). Due to their relative inexperience with elections, voters in new democracies may have difficulty understanding the workings of their countries' electoral systems, and therefore have difficulty determining how to behave strategically. Additionally, voters in new democracies often lack information regarding the parties' issue and ideological positions, the social groups they represent, and their relative chances of winning seats due to the lack of previous electoral experience to draw upon.

Drawing from previous research arguing that democracy improves with electoral experience (Lindberg, 2004, 2006), we argue that the effects of the standard array of institutional

and social cleavage variables are similarly conditioned by electoral experience. As experience with elections increases, the effects of electoral systems, presidential systems, and social cleavages increasingly approximate the effects seen in more established democracies. We test this argument using a well-established cross-national data set of elections covering a broad range of countries at differing levels of experience with elections (Bormann and Golder, 2013; see also Golder, 2005), examining whether the effects of electoral systems, ethnic cleavages, and characteristics of the presidential party system on party system fragmentation are conditioned by experience with elections.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, we discuss the literature regarding the effects of institutions and social cleavages on party system fragmentation before discussing our argument for why the effects of these variables may be conditioned by experience with elections. Following this, we provide the details of our research design before moving to a discussion of the results. The final section concludes with thoughts for future research.

Institutions, Social Cleavages, and the Number of Parties

The conventional wisdom maintains that party system fragmentation is determined by an interaction between electoral institutions and social cleavages. The effects of institutions revolve around the effects of district magnitude (the number of seats awarded in a constituency), with more parties in larger-magnitude districts than smaller-magnitude districts (Cox, 1997; Taagepera and Shugart, 1989). The conventional wisdom regarding the effect of social cleavages maintains that greater social cleavage diversity leads to greater party system fragmentation (see, for instance, Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Lijphart, 1999, p. 62-89). The interaction of these two processes leads to Duverger's 'law' and Duverger's 'hypothesis'. Duverger's law holds that low district magnitude (e.g. single-member district plurality systems)

limits party system fragmentation, as only two parties will be viable in each district, even in highly diverse countries. Duverger's hypothesis maintains that social cleavage diversity increases party system fragmentation when district magnitude is sufficiently large (and vice versa).

The effects of district magnitude are supported by strategic voting theory, which underpins Duverger's argument *vis-à-vis* the effects of electoral systems that put downward pressure on the number of parties. According to strategic voting theory, voters in low-magnitude districts strategically desert third parties in favour of their second preferences so as not to waste votes when they anticipate that their most-preferred party will place third (McKelvey and Ordeshook, 1972; Cox, 1997). Party leaders, for their part, avoid contesting elections in which they anticipate placing third (in anticipation of strategic desertion by voters). Crucial for strategic voting and desertion by voters is the assumption that voters possess sufficient information to know which parties are likely to place third (Cox, 1997, p. 79).

In addition to variables related to the legislative electoral system, the conventional wisdom holds that party system fragmentation is also affected by presidential elections. Because voters' attention is drawn primarily to the presidential race, their views toward legislative races are affected by their views of the parties in the presidential race. As a result, legislative party system fragmentation increases as the size of the presidential party system increases (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Filippov, Ordeshook, and Shvetsova, 1999; Golder, 2006; Jones, 1994, 1999).

Despite these important theoretical advances, there are reasons to believe more research is needed in order to understand the effects of institutions and cleavages on the number of parties. First, most of the existing literature is limited to relatively old, well-established

democracies (Cox, 1997; Lijphart, 1999; Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 1994). While some research—particularly the work by Clark and Golder (2006)—has expanded the range of countries in which the properties of Duverger’s seminal work have been examined, most research still remains confined to well-established democracies.

More importantly, many studies examining developing democracies find that the effects of institutions and cleavages do not always conform to the expectations of the literature (e.g. Morgenstern and Vázquez-D’Elía, 2007; Moser, 1999). Some research goes so far as to argue the effects of institutions and cleavages on party systems work in ways that contradict the expectations of the literature (Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich, 2003; though see also Brambor, Clark, and Golder, 2007). Thus, there is need for additional research to explain the patterns of party system fragmentation in newer democracies in a way that incorporates these divergent findings into the standard model of institutional and social cleavage effects.

The Conditioning Effects of Experience with Elections

One explanation for the divergent patterns of party system fragmentation between new and established democracies is that the effects of social cleavages and institutions may be conditioned by experience with elections. Voters and parties in new democracies—including democracies re-emerging after democratic breakdowns or military occupations—often start out lacking considerable information about one another. As a result, voters and parties do not know how to interact with one another, resulting in institutional and cleavage effects in new democracies that may differ substantially from more established democracies. With each successive election, giving voters and parties more chances to interact with one another, parties learn which strategies to follow and which voters to target, whilst voters learn how to make their votes count most effectively. When experience with elections is interrupted, however, the

learning process for voters and parties begins again.

From the perspective of voters, a lack of experience with elections impedes their ability to prevent wasted votes from being cast for parties that do not stand a chance of winning representation. Even in countries with some past experience with elections, trying to decide for which party one should vote following the (re-) instalment of electoral processes is difficult. Voters lack information about what the parties stand for, to which social groups each party intends to appeal, what the relative strength of each party is, and ultimately how to use this information in order to understand how the electoral system operates. Only with electoral experience can voters hope to acquire all of this information. In particular, absent knowledge about the relative strength of each party prior to the election, many voters in single-member district plurality systems will vote for a party that does not stand a chance of winning seats that they would not have voted for had they possessed such information (instead, voting strategically for a party with a better chance of winning). Similarly, in proportional representation systems, voters in countries with limited electoral experience may think they are voting strategically for a less-preferred party when in fact the electoral system is proportional enough for their most-preferred party to have won seats.

From the perspective of political parties, a lack of experience with elections also limits the degree to which parties can adjust their behaviour in order to maximize vote and seat shares. Without recent electoral experience to draw upon, parties struggle to learn which voters they appeal to, what issues voters care about, and ultimately how much electoral strength they can expect to command. Without this information, parties find it difficult to determine which electoral strategies to follow—what levels of effort and resources to put into the campaign and which districts they should compete in (or whether they should compete as a party at all)—in

order to maximize seat shares so as not to waste resources, especially on hopeless campaigns. As a result of these processes among both voters and parties, the effects of institutions and cleavages in new democracies may differ substantially from more established democracies.

This argument is consistent with recent work claiming democracy itself is something that is learned. Drawing from notions of democratization that view democracy as a process of ‘learning-by-doing’ (Lindberg, 2004, 2006; see also Diamond, 1999), this literature holds that democratization—and the quality of democracy more generally—improves with each successive election. Regardless of the quality of earlier elections, conducting elections not only confers a sense of legitimacy on the elections and fosters a sense of entitlement to high(er)-quality elections, but also fosters learning on the part of voters and parties. With each consecutive election, the likelihood of holding future elections (and freer and fairer elections) increases. This supports the expectation that consecutive experience with elections will condition the effects of institutions and social cleavages on party system fragmentation. However, when experience with elections is interrupted, parties and voters must re-learn where each other stands after electoral processes are restored in order to behave strategically. When this happens, the collection of experience with elections begins again, as parties sometimes change labels and/or their targeted base of voters between elections, while new parties enter the system trying to take advantage of the uncertainty of the new electoral environment.

Also consistent with our argument is the research demonstrating the importance of accurate information about party competition to voting behaviour. Consistent with both our argument and strategic voting theory, recent research has demonstrated the importance of possessing accurate information about the parties’ chances, showing that the absence of accurate information is sufficient to produce third-party voting in plurality systems that would not occur if

voters possessed accurate information (Blais and Turgeon, 2004; Clough, 2007; Forsythe et al., 1993). Parties and voters in countries characterised by frequent periods of unelected rule—especially those with little-to-no experience with elections—lack information about the parties’ relative chances. As a result, both parties and voters lack the ability to behave strategically in line with the expectations associated with Duverger’s law and the predictions it makes regarding the effects of institutions and social cleavages.

Hampering the ability of voters to acquire sufficient information to vote strategically is the fact that many parties in democratising countries adopt ideologically inconsistent positions and have often failed to represent clear social-group bases in the first few elections (e.g. Dix, 1989; Elster, Offe, and Preuss, 1998). As a result, newly democratised countries face high levels of electoral volatility (Bogaards, 2008; Epperly, 2011; Roberts and Wibbels, 1999) and low levels of party system institutionalization (Casal Bertoa, 2012; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Both electoral volatility and lack of institutionalization hamper the ability of voters to learn where parties stand and vote strategically. Over time, however, as parties institutionalise, adopting more consistent positions (e.g. Bakke and Sitter, 2005; Lewis 2006; Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2009), voters are able to learn where parties stand on major issues with implications for their particular social groups (Evans and Whitefield, 2006)

The result of party institutionalisation and learning is a reduction in wasted voting. Previous research shows that support for parties with little chance of winning representation diminishes as experience with democracy increases (Dawisha and Deets, 2006; Lago and Martinez i Coma, 2012; Tavits and Annus, 2006). Other research examining district-level party systems demonstrates that wasted votes, support for hopeless parties, and other coordination failures preventing strategic voting are more common in countries with less electoral experience

than more established democracies (Crisp, Olivella, and Potter, 2012; Moser and Scheiner, 2009; Riera, 2013).

Taken together, this literature suggests that experience with elections conditions the impact of electoral systems on party system fragmentation. Due to a lack of party institutionalisation and the resulting electoral volatility, voters in developing democracies lack the necessary information about the parties to vote strategically. As a result, low district magnitudes may not limit party system fragmentation in countries with limited electoral experience. However, with additional experience, voters will learn more about the parties in order to determine how to behave strategically, resulting in fewer wasted votes and thus reducing party system fragmentation in low-magnitude settings.

Similar to the impact that a lack of experience with elections can have on the effects of electoral system properties, a lack of experience with elections can also hamper the translation of social cleavages into political parties, producing relationships between social diversity and party system fragmentation that are contradictory to those seen in more established democracies. As part of the process of voters learning what parties stand for and parties learning to which voters their policies appeal (e.g. Evans and Whitefield, 2006), too many parties may emerge to contest the earliest elections in countries with less experience with elections and low-to-moderate social diversity, resulting in more wasted votes than established democracies with similar institutional and social profiles. In more diverse countries, less experience may reverse this effect and produce lower party system fragmentation than established democracies. This can be seen most clearly in several African party systems, which are characterised by high social diversity yet low party system fragmentation (Bogaards, 2004; Erdmann and Basedau, 2008). These low levels of party system fragmentation occur in part because presidents often try to build the broadest

coalitions possible in order to limit the effects that defection by any one ethnic group can have on their tenure in office (Hyden, 2006: 103-104), and because opposition parties are often too busy competing among themselves to provide coherent policy programmes to their voters (Lindberg, 2006). However, with each successive election, opposition parties begin to organise and compete more effectively, resulting in higher levels of support (Lindberg, 2004). Thus, the effect of social cleavage diversity in countries with less experience with elections may differ considerably from the effect seen in more established democracies, possibly producing a negative effect on party system fragmentation. As experience with elections increases and opposition parties become more organised, the effect of social diversity may begin to produce increases in party system fragmentation (as is the case in established democracies).

Finally, in addition to the effects of district magnitude on legislative party system fragmentation, the ‘coattail effects’ of presidential systems on legislative party systems noted by previous research (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Filippov, Ordeshook, and Shvetsova, 1999; Golder, 2006; Jones, 1994, 1999) may also be conditioned by experience with elections. Namely, we expect that as experience with elections increases, voters and parties become better able to recognise when supporting certain presidential candidates’ parties in legislative elections will result in wasted votes. This, in turn, leads to a reduction in the coattail effects from presidential races to legislative party systems.

Research Design

To determine whether institutional and social cleavage effects differ according to countries’ degree of experience with elections, we examine the effects of these variables using Matt Golder’s (2005) cross-national data set, which was used by Clark and Golder (2006) in their influential study of the interaction effects of institutional and social cleavage variables. Because

the time series in Golder's (2005) data set ends in 2000, we use the updated data set produced by Bormann and Golder (2013). After all controls are included, this data set contains elections from 89 countries covering the years from 1946-2011.¹ All countries included in the data set (though not necessarily all elections) meet the democratic criteria set forth by Przeworski et al. (1996).²

In an effort to build upon previous work, we start with the same basic model of legislative party system fragmentation examined by Clark and Golder (2006). Their model is framed around the seminal work by Amorim Neto and Cox (1997), which predicts the number of vote-winning parties using a combination of institutional and social cleavage variables. Following this previous work, our dependent variable is the effective number of electoral parties (*ENEP*)—the standard measure of party system fragmentation developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979)—from elections to the lower house of countries' legislatures. Following the practice of Clark and Golder (2006), we also apply the correction to this measure suggested by Taagepera (1997), which takes the uncertainty resulting from 'other' party categories into account.

To explain the number of parties, we employ two variables related to the legislative electoral system: (logged) district magnitude (*LogM*, the mean number of seats awarded per constituency) and the percentage of seats in the lower house allocated in a second (and third, where applicable) tier (*Upper Tier*). To control for the effects that presidential systems may have on the number of parties, we follow the practice of Amorim Neto and Cox (1997) and Clark and Golder (2006) and include variables measuring the effective number of presidential candidates (*ENPRES*), whether legislative and presidential elections were held concurrently (*Proximity*), and an interaction between the two variables. Descriptive statistics for each variable are presented in Table A.1 in the Appendix.

As with previous work testing the interaction effects of electoral institutions and social cleavages, we also include a measure of social diversity. In order to facilitate comparison with previous research, we include a measure of the effective number of ethnic groups (*Ethnic*) employed by Clark and Golder (2006), which uses data from Fearon (2003). In order to demonstrate the robustness of the results, we also make use of an alternative source of data on the sizes of ethnic groups provided by the Ethnic Power Relations data set, calculating an effective number of ethnic groups using these data (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min, 2009). We centre both variables to zero (with zero reflecting only one ethnic group). Following the practice of Amorim Neto and Cox (1997) and Clark and Golder (2006), we create interactions between the ethnic diversity variables and both *LogM* and *Upper Tier*.

While the use of ethnic diversity as a proxy for social cleavages of all sorts is clearly unsatisfactory, we continue to rely on this measure for two reasons. First, because previous studies have focused on variables measuring ethnic diversity, following the established practice makes our results comparable to previous studies, which in turn highlights any important differences between our study and previous research. Second, although focusing on ethnic diversity allows us to measure only one type of cleavage, we can at least confidently say that we are validly measuring ethnic diversity, and thus can determine whether greater diversity of one type of cleavage (ethnicity) leads to increased party system fragmentation. Although other cleavages likely play a role in shaping party system fragmentation, their measurement is more difficult from one country to the next. Thus, while focusing on ethnic diversity alone limits the extent to which we can infer about the effects of ‘cleavage’ diversity, it allows us to discuss—at a minimum—the effect of one type of cleavage diversity on party system fragmentation.

To demonstrate the importance of experience with elections, we include a variable

measuring consecutive experience with elections. This variable is coded zero for the first election since the last breakdown of democratic elections (or for the first ever democratic election), one for the second consecutive election, two for the third consecutive election, three for the fourth consecutive election, and four for the fifth (and subsequent) consecutive election.³ We use five or more consecutive elections as the cut-off point for election experience following the practice of previous research (Crisp, Olivella, and Potter, 2012; Tavits and Annus, 2006). In determining previous experience with elections, we treat all series of multiparty elections (including elections prior to decolonization) that are not broken up by coups d'état or other suspensions of multiparty practice (such as wartime occupations and transitions from multiparty to one-party or no-party elections) as forming a consecutive series of elections, even if these multiparty elections are not fully democratic and/or free and fair. Dates of coups d'état are taken from Powell and Thyne (2011). This follows the theory and practice of Lindberg (2004, 2006), who argues that experience with elections, however flawed, lead to improvements in the quality of democracy. The list of countries and election years at each level of consecutive experience with elections is presented in Table A.2 in the Appendix. We then create interactions between this variable and ethnic diversity, district magnitude, the two presidential system variables (*ENPRES* and *Proximity*), and the interactions among these variables (i.e. between district magnitude and ethnic diversity, proximity and *ENPRES*). These interactions allow us to estimate the effects of ethnic diversity and institutions at different levels of experience with elections.

Following the practice in Clark and Golder (2006), we use ordinary least squares linear regression with standard errors clustered by country. We analyse the results of two models: one using the Fearon measure of ethnic diversity and the other using the Ethnic Power Relations measure. Alternative models—for example, using panel-corrected standard errors—were also

estimated, producing less conservative results than those presented here.⁴ Because of this, we only present the results using ordinary least squares with robust standard errors.⁵

Results

Parameter estimates for each variable are presented in Table 1. Although the information that can be gleaned from the parameter estimates alone is limited in the presence of interaction effects, a few points deserve mention. First, as determined by joint significance tests reported at the bottom of Table 1, the interaction effects in both models demonstrate that experience with elections has a significant conditioning effect on the three variables of interest: (logged) district magnitude, ethnic diversity, and presidential party systems (*ENPRES*). Second, while the partial effects of the variables related to the presidential party system (i.e. the coefficients themselves, which assume all interaction effects are zero) reach statistical significance, the partial effects of district magnitude and ethnic diversity are not significant (at least not in the model using the Ethnic Power Relations measure of ethnic diversity), with some of these coefficients appearing in the opposite direction from that predicted by the literature. Because these partial effects represent the impact of these variables in countries conducting their first elections, these findings suggest that significant differences in the effects of these variables exist between countries with limited experiences with elections and countries with longer experiences. Third, it is interesting to note that the two models produce very similar estimates. This demonstrates the robustness of the findings using the Fearon measure of ethnic diversity. Fourth, the partial effect of the number of consecutive elections a country has held is negative and statistically significant. This indicates that, *ceteris paribus*, greater experience with elections reduces party system fragmentation: as parties and voters become more familiar with one another, voters come to realise that some parties are not viable, and recognizing this, these hopeless parties remove

themselves from the electoral environment. This can be seen in Figure 1, which presents the predicted values of party system fragmentation at different levels of experience with elections, holding all other variables to their minimum values. We comment further on this point below.

Table 1 and Figure 1 about here

Because a complete interpretation of interaction effects requires interpreting the coefficients of variables of interest and their moderating variables simultaneously (Brambor, Clark, and Golder, 2006), we present and discuss the results using a series of figures. First, regarding the effect of ethnic diversity, Figure 2 presents the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of the *Ethnic* variable, again using the results from model 1 and assuming a district magnitude of one (i.e. $LogM = 0$). We assume this value of district magnitude in order to isolate the effect of ethnic diversity in single-member district plurality electoral systems that provide incentives against casting wasted votes, where the literature based on Duverger's law predicts that the number of parties should not exceed two. To determine the effect of experience with elections, separate predicted values are presented for the lowest and highest levels of experience with elections (one election versus five or more elections).

Figure 2 about here

The results demonstrate that the effect of ethnic diversity differs substantially according to countries' experience with elections. Beginning with countries with little ethnic diversity holding their first election, the predicted value of party system fragmentation is effectively 4.20 parties, which is significantly greater than the predictions of effectively two-party competition in single-member district plurality systems. Contrary to the expectations of the literature, this value drops as ethnic diversity increases. This demonstrates the difficulties facing socially diverse countries with little experience with elections (i.e. weakly institutionalised party systems, well-

funded governing parties, and poorly organised and funded opposition parties that do not cooperate with one another).

As experience with elections accumulates, however, opposition parties coordinate and compete more effectively with governing parties, and the effect of increasing ethnic diversity becomes positive. This can be seen among countries having conducted five or more elections: in these countries, the effect of ethnic diversity is positive (in keeping with previous literature). Additionally, the range of the predicted values is in keeping with previous literature as well. In countries with the lowest levels of ethnic diversity, predicted party system fragmentation is around effectively 2.74 parties with five or more consecutive elections. This is far lower than countries conducting their first elections, and roughly in line with the literature's expectations that single-member districts should constrain the number of viable parties to roughly two. Higher levels of ethnic diversity produce even larger party system fragmentation. Although this seemingly defies a strict interpretation of Duverger's law holding that the number of parties will not exceed two even in cases of extreme social diversity, this predicted value need not be interpreted as a violation of two-party predictions, as the number of parties in any one district may still converge on two parties (Cox, 1999; however, see also Raymond, 2013; Singer, 2013).

Turning to the effects of the electoral system, we again see significant conditioning effects due to experience with elections. Figure 3 presents the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of $\text{Log}M$ in countries holding their first election and countries with five or more consecutive elections, holding ethnic diversity at zero. As noted above, previous research maintains that the electoral system should constrain party development at lower levels of district magnitude while allowing for multiparty systems to develop at higher levels. The results presented in Figure 3 show that while this is clearly the case for countries

with five or more consecutive elections, it is not necessarily the case among countries with more limited experience with elections. Among those countries that have conducted five or more consecutive elections, the effect of district magnitude is clearly positive, with the lowest predicted values of party system fragmentation at the lowest values of district magnitude (and vice versa among high values of district magnitude). Moreover, these predicted values are significantly different from the baseline predicted values (i.e. the constant—effectively 4.20 parties): lower values of district magnitude are associated with significantly lower predicted values of party system fragmentation, while higher values of district magnitude are associated with significantly larger predicted values of party system fragmentation.

Figure 3 about here

The same cannot be said for countries conducting their first election following a transition. While there is a slight positive slope to the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of district magnitude, these predicted values are not significantly different from the baseline predicted values. Thus, district magnitude does not have the expected effects on party system fragmentation in countries holding their first election. As the results from countries with five or more consecutive elections demonstrate, increasing experience with elections will lead to district magnitude having the effect on party system fragmentation that the literature expects.

Finally, turning to the effects of presidential systems on legislative party system fragmentation, Figure 4 presents the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of the variable measuring the effective number of presidential candidates (*ENPRES*), again focusing on the difference between countries holding their first elections since a transition and countries holding their fifth (at least) consecutive election. In order to study the coattail effects

of presidential party systems on legislative party systems most clearly, this figure holds the proximity between presidential and legislative elections to one (i.e. the most concurrent). At both levels of experience with elections, the results show that the effect of *ENPRES* is positive (and significant). However, this effect weakens considerably in countries with more experience with elections. These differences become significant at *ENPRES* values just over 2.5 and continue to remain significant across the entire range of values in the figure.⁶ In other words, these results show that the spill-over from presidential to legislative party system fragmentation is reduced as countries acquire more experience with elections. While legislators in countries with greater experience with elections may still ride the coattails of popular presidential candidates (or be dragged down by unpopular presidents), these results suggest that they are not as bound to the fate of their party's presidential candidate as in countries with less experience with elections. Although the results regarding the effect of the size of the presidential party system initially seem somewhat dour for party systems in developing democracies, this finding actually shows that the spill-over effects from presidential to legislative party systems weaken over time. As the effect of the presidential party system weakens, the effects of district magnitude and ethnic diversity are able to exert proportionally more influence on the development of legislative party systems. Considering the authoritarian tendencies and lack of competition characterising some countries' presidential elections, this finding may actually be quite positive for legislative party systems in developing democracies. As with Figures 2 and 3, Figure 4 demonstrates that experience with elections also conditions the effects of presidential party system fragmentation on legislative party system fragmentation.

Figure 4 about here

Taken together, these results demonstrate that experience with elections is an important

factor conditioning the effects of the primary institutional and structural variables used to explain variation in party system fragmentation cross-nationally. The effects of ethnic diversity, district magnitude, and variables related to the presidential system differ considerably between new and established democracies. As countries gain more experience with elections, these effects begin to resemble those effects seen in the more democracies. This suggests that voters and party elites face a significant learning curve that affects the appearance of institutional and structural effects that can be overcome only by continued practice and experience with democratic elections.

Returning to the finding noted above that experience with elections tends to reduce party system fragmentation, what are the implications of the results for the three variables—district magnitude, ethnic diversity, and the size of the presidential party system—for the effect of experience with elections? This discussion is particularly important for those countries with low levels of party system fragmentation—especially for those countries with limited party system fragmentation despite high levels of ethnic diversity—as reduced party system fragmentation resulting from greater experience with elections may result in even less competitive elections, thereby reducing its prospects for democratic consolidation. The findings regarding the effects of district magnitude and ethnic diversity bode well for developing democracies, as increases in these variables produce significantly larger party systems over time. Not only are these variables conditioned by experience with elections, but these variables in turn condition the negative effect that experience with elections has on the size of the party system, reducing it to a nil effect in highly proportional and/or highly ethnically diverse societies. Additionally, while the sign of the coefficient for the interaction between experience with elections and the fragmentation of the presidential party system is negative, this is not cause for concern. Rather this negative coefficient only indicates that the effect of experience with elections is most negative in

countries with very fragmented presidential party systems, which reflects greater need to shed excess parties that have little appeal among voters. In highly diverse societies with proportional electoral systems that have more moderate levels of presidential party system fragmentation, the negative partial coefficient could easily have no net effect on legislative party system fragmentation.

Conclusion

The findings presented here suggest that institutional and social cleavage effects on party systems are learned through experience with elections. These results support the growing body of theory and evidence maintaining that the effects of institutions and social cleavages on party system fragmentation are conditioned by (consecutive) experience with elections. One of the primary implications of these findings is that democratic institutions require several consecutive elections before parties and voters fully understand them. Parties may well require several elections before they fully understand both the rules of the electoral system and the level of sophistication of voters. Given the informational ambiguities facing both voters and parties in the early stages of democratic elections, it may take an electoral drubbing or two for parties to adjust to the effects of district magnitude and the presidential party system, and for parties to reflect the social diversity of the (decreasingly volatile) electorate accurately, which may require new parties to enter the electoral scene. Parties may face a stronger incentive than voters to learn quickly, as many voters pay attention to politics only during elections. On the other hand, voters also face considerable incentives to learn so as not to waste their votes on hopeless parties. This supports recent work emphasizing the importance of voters possessing accurate information for strategic voting to occur (e.g. Blais and Turgeon, 2004; Clough, 2007). Regardless, it seems that both voters and parties need rather considerable practice to begin to respond to institutional

constraints as predicted in the literature focusing on advanced industrial democracies.

In addition to demonstrating that the effects of electoral systems are conditioned by consecutive experience with elections, this paper contributes to the literature by showing that the effects of variables relating to the presidential system are conditioned by experience with elections in the same way as variables related to electoral systems. Together with the results regarding the effects of the electoral system and ethnic diversity, this finding demonstrates further that experience with elections has important consequences for the number of parties. With more electoral experience, the effects of presidential party systems on legislative party systems in developing countries begin to mirror those repeatedly demonstrated in studies of party system fragmentation in advanced industrial democracies, as voters and parties learn more about one another and how to behave strategically enough so as to limit the number of wasted votes cast. Consistent with Lindberg (2004, 2006), these findings suggest that voters and parties learn how to operate in elections only through repeated practice.

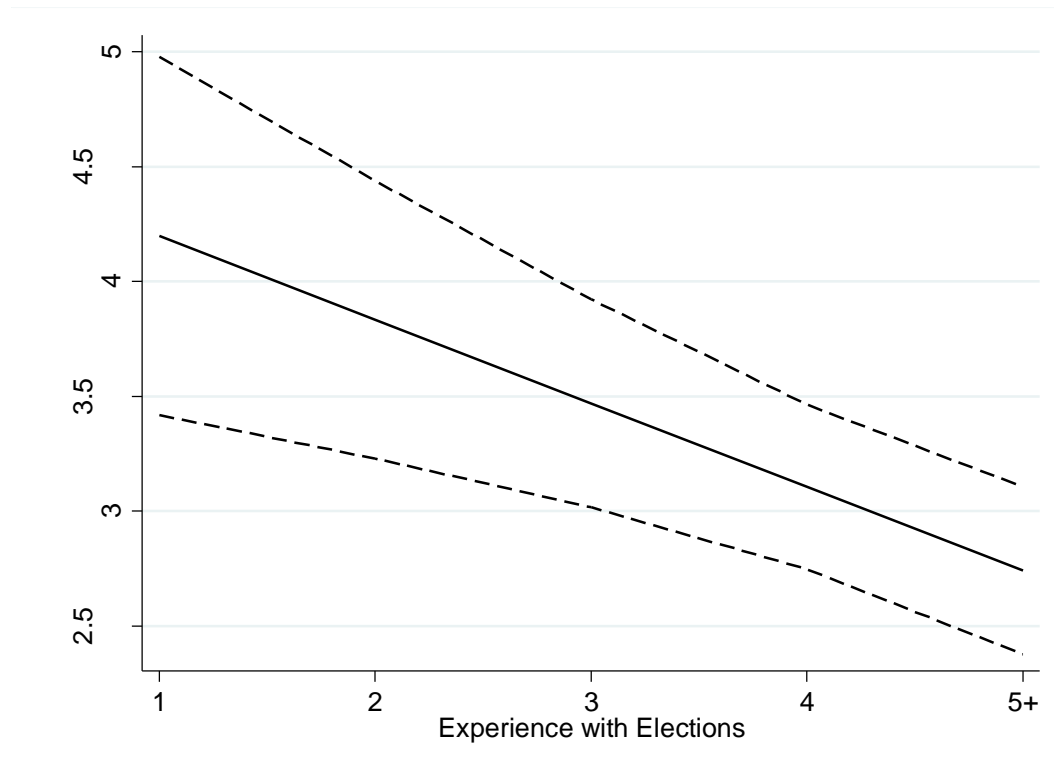
One particular area for future research would be to examine how other cleavage effects change over time to determine the robustness of the findings presented here regarding ethnic diversity. The findings of this study are limited to a certain extent by the fact that we follow established practice in the literature and only examine the effects of ethnic diversity on party system fragmentation. If the effects of other cleavages develop with experience with elections in much the same manner as the effects of ethnic diversity have been shown to develop in this paper, this would confirm the findings presented here. If differences in the effects of other cleavages arise, this might help us to learn more about why some party systems consolidate more quickly and more fully than others, as some cleavage structures may be more conducive to the development of stable party systems.

Table 1: The Effects of Experience with Elections on Party System Fragmentation (ENEP)

Independent Variables	Measure of Ethnic Diversity	
	Fearon	Ethnic Power Relations
LogM	0.10 (0.19)	-0.03 (0.22)
Ethnic	-0.13 (0.07) [†]	-0.09 (0.18)
LogM x Ethnic	0.12 (0.18)	0.24 (0.20)
Upper Tier	0.03 (0.01)**	0.02 (0.01)**
Upper Tier x Ethnic	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Proximity	-4.29 (1.00)**	-3.95 (0.96)**
ENPRES	1.08 (0.39)**	1.12 (0.41)**
Proximity x ENPRES	0.35 (0.37)	0.13 (0.38)
Number of Elections	-0.36 (0.12)**	-0.38 (0.14)**
Number of Elections x LogM	0.09 (0.05)	0.12 (0.06)*
Number of Elections x Ethnic	0.15 (0.05)**	0.12 (0.05)*
Number of Elections x LogM x Ethnic	0.01 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.05)
Number of Elections x Proximity	0.32 (0.28)	0.28 (0.27)
Number of Elections x ENPRES	-0.26 (0.11)*	-0.26 (0.11)*
Number of Elections x Proximity x ENPRES	0.15 (0.12)	0.21 (0.13)
Constant	4.20 (0.47)**	4.30 (0.56)**
Joint Significance: LogM + Interactions	10.30**	11.22**
Joint Significance: Ethnic + Interactions	5.65**	13.17**
Joint Significance: ENPRES + Interactions	3.99*	4.20*
Adjusted R ²	0.34	0.34
n	755	721

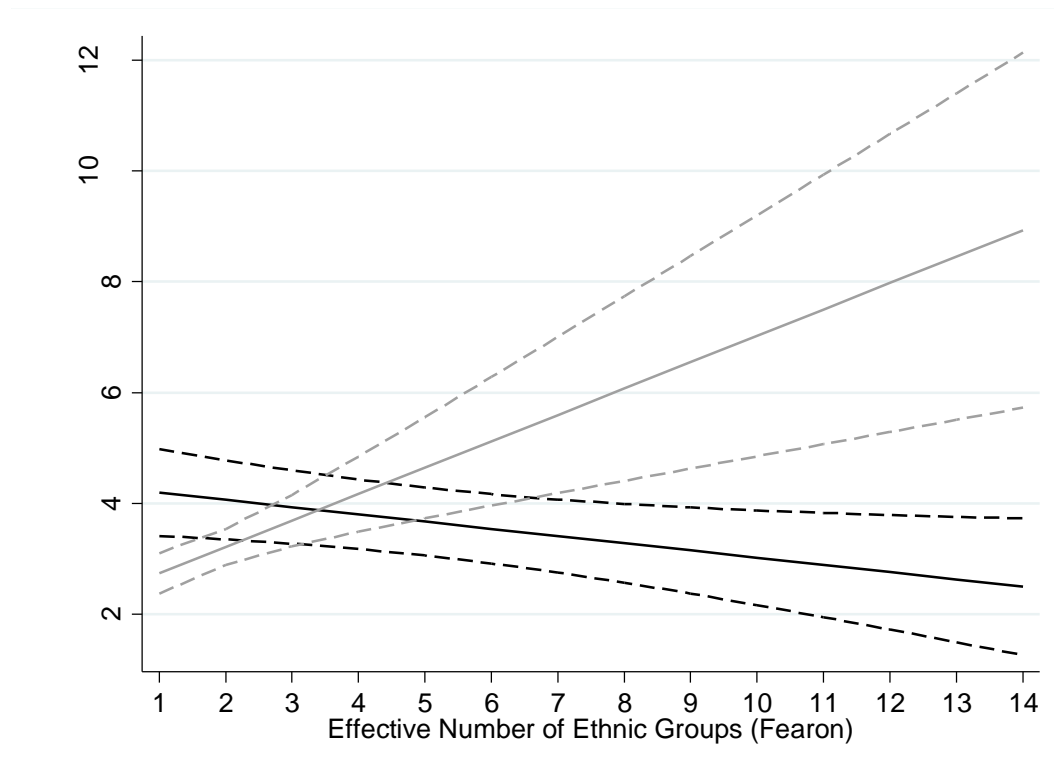
[†] p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, two-tailed tests. Entries are ordinary least squares linear regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Robust standard errors are clustered by country. The three joint significance tests test the alternative hypotheses, e.g., LogM + (Number of Elections x LogM) ≠ 0 against the null hypothesis that all specified effects jointly equal zero.

Figure 1: The Effect of Experience with Elections on Party System Fragmentation



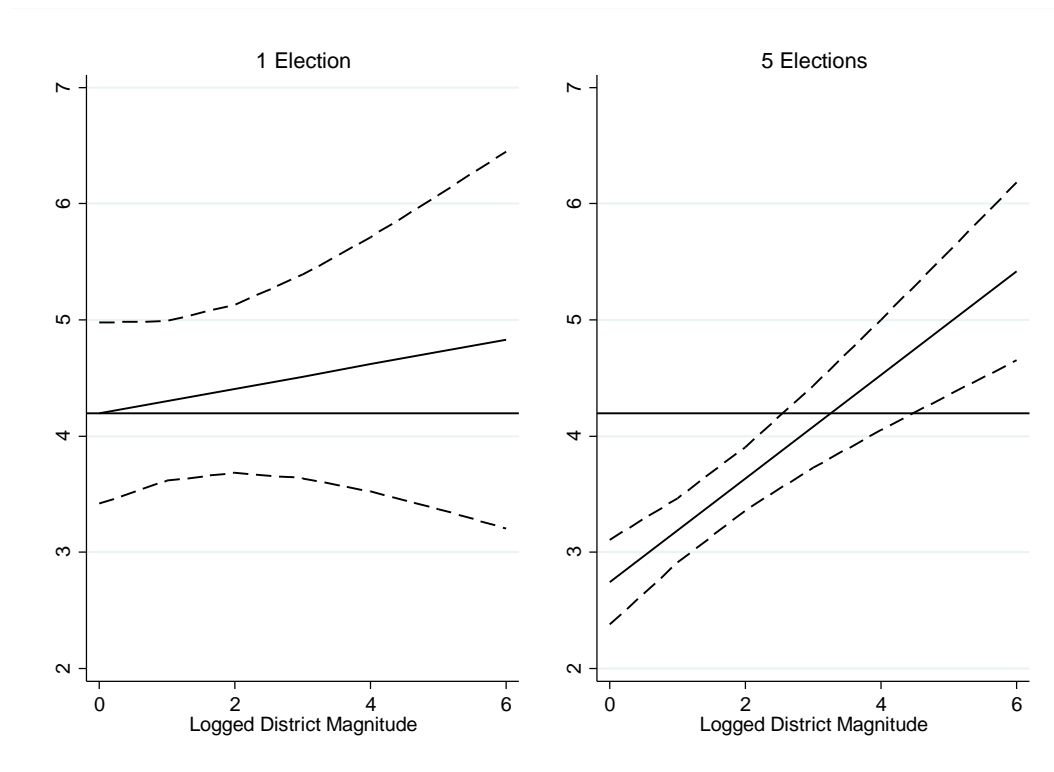
The solid line reflects the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of the experience with elections variable. Dashed lines reflect 90 percent confidence intervals for each set of predicted values. Note that the predicted values are generated by assuming countries at the lowest level of ethnic diversity with single-member districts (i.e. $\text{LogM} = 0$) without upper tiers or presidential systems.

Figure 2: The Effect of Ethnic Diversity on Party System Fragmentation, Conditional on Experience with Elections



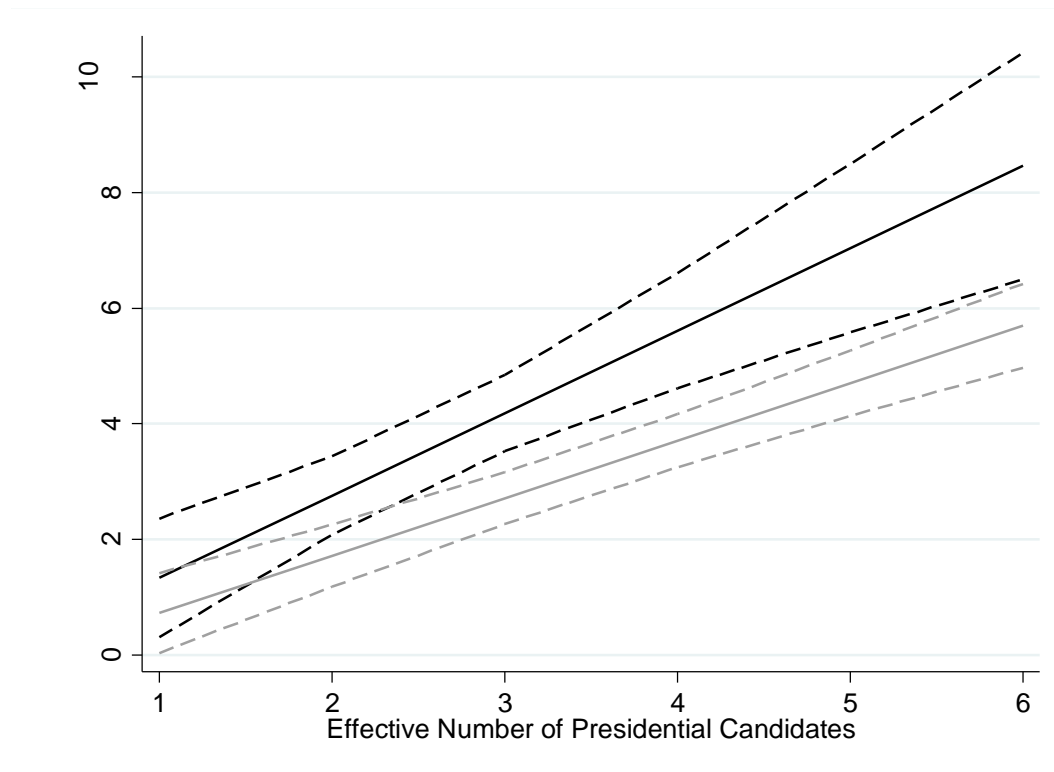
Solid lines reflect the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of the effective number of ethnic groups (ENEG) variable for countries experiencing their first election since the (re-)instalment of elections (black) and countries experiencing five or more consecutive elections (grey). Dashed lines reflect 90 percent confidence intervals for each set of predicted values.

Figure 3: The Effect of District Magnitude on Party System Fragmentation, Conditional on Experience with Elections



Solid black lines are the predicted values of party system fragmentation, with the dashed lines above and below the predicted values reflecting 90 percent confidence intervals. The horizontal dashed line delineates the predicted value of party system fragmentation when all other variables are held at zero (i.e. the constant).

Figure 4: The Effect of Presidential Candidate Fragmentation on Party System Fragmentation, Conditional on Experience with Elections



Solid lines reflect the predicted values of party system fragmentation across the range of the effective number of presidential candidates (ENPRES) variable for countries experiencing their first election since the (re-)instalment of elections (black) and countries experiencing five or more consecutive elections (grey). Dashed lines reflect 90 percent confidence intervals for each set of predicted values.

Appendix Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
ENEP (Party System Fragmentation)	4.02	1.96
LogM	1.36	1.32
Ethnic – Fearon and Laitin	0.88	1.18
Ethnic – Ethnic Power Relations	0.78	1.12
Upper Tier	6.06	13.55
Proximity	0.29	0.41
ENPRES	1.27	1.65
Number of Elections	3.33	1.25

Appendix Table A.2: List of Countries by Consecutive Experience with Elections

Countries (Year) with One Election			
Argentina (1946, 1963, 1973, 1983)	Armenia (1995)	Benin (1991)	Bhutan (2008)
Brazil (1958, 1982)	Burundi (1993, 2005)	Czechoslovakia (1990)	Ecuador (1979)
Fiji (1992)	Germany (1949)	Ghana (1979)	Greece (1974)
Hungary (1990)	Indonesia (1999)	Israel (1949)	Macedonia (1994)
Malawi (1994)	Mali (1992)	Nepal (1991)	Netherlands (1946)
Niger (1993)	Nigeria (1999)	Pakistan (1977, 1990, 2008)	Paraguay (1989)
Peru (1963, 1980, 2001)	Philippines (1946)	Poland (1991)	Sierra Leone (1996, 2002)
Spain (1977)	Thailand (1992, 2011)	Turkey (1961, 1973, 1983)	Uganda (1980)
Countries (Year) with Two Consecutive Elections			
Albania (1992)	Argentina (1965, 1985)	Armenia (1999)	Austria (1949)
Benin (1995)	Brazil (1947, 1962, 1986)	Bulgaria (1991)	Central African Republic (1998)
Chile (1993)	Croatia (1992)	Czechoslovakia (1992)	East Timor (2007)
Ecuador (1984)	El Salvador (1985)	Fiji (1994)	Germany (1953)
Greece (1977)	Guatemala (1966)	Hungary (1994)	Indonesia (2004)
Israel (1951)	Japan (1947)	Latvia (1993)	Liberia (2005)
Lithuania (1992)	Macedonia (1998)	Malawi (1999)	Moldova (1998)
Mongolia (1992)	Nepal (1994)	Netherlands (1948)	Nicaragua (1990)
Nigeria (2003)	Norway (1949)	Pakistan (1993)	Paraguay (1993)
Peru (1985, 2006)	Philippines (1949, 1992)	Poland (1993)	Portugal (1976)
Sierra Leone (2007)	Slovakia (1998)	Spain (1979)	Sri Lanka (1952)
Thailand (1983, 1992)	Turkey (1977, 1987)	Venezuela (1963)	
Countries (Year) with Three Consecutive Elections			
Albania (1996)	Argentina (1951, 1987)	Armenia (2003)	Austria (1953)
Bangladesh (1991)	Brazil (1950, 1990)	Bulgaria (1994)	Chile (1997)
Croatia (1995)	Cyprus (1985)	Czech Republic (2002)	Ecuador (1986)
El Salvador (1988)	Fiji (1999)	France (1946)	Germany (1957)
Guinea Bissau (2008)	Greece (1981)	Guatemala (1970)	Hungary (1998)
Indonesia (2009)	Israel (1955)	Japan (1949)	Kenya (2002)
Latvia (1995)	Lithuania (1996)	Macedonia (2002)	Mali (1997)
Mongolia (1996)	Myanmar (1956)	Nepal (1999)	Netherlands (1952)
Nicaragua (1996)	Nigeria (1964, 2007)	Norway (1953)	Panama (1960)
Paraguay (1998)	Peru (1990, 2011)	Philippines (1953, 1995)	Poland (1997)
Portugal (1979)	Spain (1982)	Sri Lanka (1956)	Thailand (1986, 1995)
Turkey (1969, 1991)	Venezuela (1968)		
Countries (Year) with Four Consecutive Elections			
Albania (1997)	Argentina (1954, 1989)	Austria (1956)	Benin (2003)
Bangladesh (1996)	Brazil (1954, 1994)	Bulgaria (1997)	Chile (2001)
Croatia (2000)	Cyprus (1991)	Czech Republic (2006)	Dominican Republic (1978)
Ecuador (1988)	El Salvador (1991)	France (1951)	Germany (1961)
Ghana (2004)	Greece (1952, 1985)	Guatemala (1994)	Hungary (2002)
Israel (1959)	Japan (1952)	Kyrgyzstan (2007)	Latvia (1998)
Lithuania (2000)	Macedonia (2006)	Mongolia (2000)	Netherlands (1956)

Nicaragua (2001)	Norway (1957)	Paraguay (2003)	Philippines (1957, 1998)
Poland (2001)	Portugal (1980)	Slovakia (2006)	Somalia (1964)
Spain (1986)	Sri Lanka (1960)	Thailand (1988, 1996)	Turkey (1995)
Ukraine (2006)	Venezuela (1973)		
Countries (Year) with Five or More Consecutive Elections			
Albania (2001, 2005, 2009)	Argentina (1958, 1960, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001)	Australia (1946, 1949, 1951, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010)	Austria (1959, 1962, 1966, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2008)
Belgium (2003, 2007, 2010)	Bangladesh (2001, 2008)	Brazil (1998, 2002, 2006, 2010)	Bulgaria (2001, 2005, 2009)
Canada (1949, 1953, 1957, 1958, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1968, 1972, 1974, 1979, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011)	Chile (1949, 1953, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1969, 1973, 2005, 2009)	Colombia (1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1991, 1994, 2006, 2010)	Costa Rica (1953, 1958, 1962, 1966, 1970, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010)
Croatia (2003, 2007)	Cyprus (1996, 2001, 2006, 2011)	Czech Republic (2010)	Denmark (1947, 1950, 1953 [Apr.], 1953 [Sep.], 1957, 1960, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2011)
Dominican Republic (1982, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010)	Ecuador (1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2006, 2009)	El Salvador (1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009)	Finland (1948, 1951, 1954, 1958, 1962, 1966, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011)
France (1956, 1958, 1962, 1967, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1981, 1986, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2007)	Germany (1965, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2009)	Ghana (2008)	Greece (1956, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2009)
Georgia (2008)	Guatemala (1995, 1999, 2007, 2011)	Honduras (1997, 2001, 2005, 2009)	Hungary (2006, 2010)
India (1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1999, 2004, 2009)	Ireland (1948, 1951, 1954, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2011)	Israel (1961, 1965, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2006, 2009)	Italy (1994, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2008)
Jamaica (1962, 1967, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2011)	Japan (1953, 1955, 1958, 1960, 1963, 1967, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009)	Latvia (2002, 2006, 2010, 2011)	Lithuania (2004, 2008)
Macedonia (2008, 2011)	Mexico (2000, 2003, 2006, 2009)	Moldova (2009 [Apr.], 2009 [Jul.], 2010)	Mongolia (2004, 2008)
Netherlands (1959, 1963, 1967, 1971, 1972, 1977,	New Zealand (1946, 1949, 1951, 1954, 1957,	Nicaragua (2006, 2011)	Niger (2004)

1981, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010)	1960, 1963, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011		
Norway (1961, 1965, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009)	Panama (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009)	Paraguay (2008)	Peru (1962)
Philippines (1961, 1965)	Poland (2005, 2007, 2011)	Portugal (1983, 1985, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2009)	Senegal (2001, 2007)
Serbia (& Montenegro) (2000, 2003, 2007, 2008)	Slovakia (2010)	South Korea (2000, 2004, 2008)	Spain (1989, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008)
Sri Lanka (1960, 1965, 1970, 1977, 1989, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010)	Sweden (1948, 1952, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1964, 1968, 1970, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010)	Switzerland (1947, 1951, 1957, 1959, 1963, 1967, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011)	Taiwan (1998, 2001, 2004, 2008)
Thailand (2001, 2005)	Trinidad and Tobago (1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2007, 2010)	Turkey (1999, 2001, 2007, 2011)	United Kingdom (1945, 1950, 1951, 1955, 1959, 1964, 1966, 1970, 1974 [Feb.], 1974 [Oct.], 1979, 1983, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2010)
Ukraine (2007)	USA (1946, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010)	Venezuela (1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2010)	

Note: for each level of experience with democracy, entries are the elections (years) in each country. Note that only countries with valid (non-system missing) data are included.

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¹ Following Golder (2007), we drop all elections from the data set where the ‘other’ category used to calculate *ENEP* exceeds 15 percent, all non-competitive elections, all elections using a fused vote in presidential and legislative elections, and countries with majoritarian upper tiers.

² Recognising that this rule omits several African countries where dominant one-party systems are prominent (which in turn might undermine the effects of experience with elections), we re-ran the analysis by including additional African countries collected by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2007). Additionally, to rule out the possibility that the results are due to the inclusion of countries that are so well-established that they distort the conclusions that would be drawn by looking at a sample including only developing democracies, we also examined models excluding countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The results of these robustness tests (presented in the Supplementary File confirm those presented here.

³ Because most countries have at least some experience with elections during their history, we examined whether countries truly holding their first-ever elections were different from those countries holding their first elections since a suspension in their electoral histories. The results of these additional analyses (seen in the Supplementary File) justify treating all countries experiencing their first consecutive election as equivalent.

⁴ Because the time variable (elections) is not regularly spaced once several cases were deleted, we were unable to use alternative estimators such as Newey-West standard errors.

⁵ We also tested and found support for the assumption that the effect of the election experience variable is linear (see the Supplementary File).

⁶ We have truncated the scale in this figure to six due to the fact that values greater than six are outlying, constituting less than one percent of the sample.